

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5717

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR EG XF

SUBJECT: EGYPT ATTACKS SYRIA OVER SYRIAN-PLO ACCORD AND COMMUNIQUE

REF: (A) CAIRO 10230 (B) CAIRO 10250 (C) BEIRUT 6717

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1. FOLLOWING NEGATIVE BUT UNOFFICIAL REACTION JULY 30 (REF A), "OFFICIAL GOE SPOKESMAN" REACTED ANGRILY TO SYRIAN-PLO AGREEMENT AND PARTICULARLY TO "JOINT COMMUNIQUE" ISSUED IN DAMASCUS JULY 29. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT "OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN" WAS DEPPRIMIN/FONMIN ISMAIL FAHMY. FAHMY FULLY EXPLOITS ARAFAT'S DISCLAIMER OF CONTENTS OF "JOINT COMMUNIQUE" (REF B) BUT GOES WELL BEYOND ARAFAT IN ATTACKING SYRIA. SHORT-LIVED SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN DETENTE FOLLOWING JUNE RIYADH MEETING IS CLEARLY OVER AS FAHMY ENGAGED WITH RELISH IN FAVORITE GOE "POLICY OF EXPOSURE" OF SYRIAN PERFIDIES. AKHBAR BANNERS: "EGYPT EXPOSES THE CONSPIRACY."

2. ASSUME FULL TEXT OF STATEMENT AS CONTAINED CAIRO PRESS JULY 31 CARRIED FBIS. FAHMY'S MAJOR CHARGES WERE:

A. SYRIAN PLAN FOR LIQUIDATION OF PLO IN COLLUSION WITH ISRAEL, FRANJIYA AND CHAMOUN. ACCORD CALLED "DOCUMENT OF SUBMISSION" FOR ITS FAILURE TO MENTION WITHDRAWAL OF SYRIAN TROOPS," THE BASIC DEMAND OF PALESTINIANS/LEFTISTS AS PRECONDITION FOR SETTLEMENT. STRANGELY, DAMASCUS TALKS OCCURRED IN ABSENCE "VARIOUS LEBANESE PARTIES". DIRECT CONTACTS IN GENEVA BETWEEN SYRIAN AND ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE SERVICES, WHICH EGYPT UNVEILING FOR FIRST TIME, ARE AIMED AT LIQUIDATING PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE AND PRESENCE IN LEBANON OR AT MINIMUM IMPOSING SYRIAN "GUARDIANSHIP" OVER PALESTINIANS AND LEBANESE. SYRIAN MOTIVE IN SIGNING ACCORD ONLY TO GAIN TIME TO REPLACE OPEN KILLING OF PALESTINIANS BY OTHER MEANS OF LIQUIDATION OF PLO AND ITS LEADERS. SYRIANS INTEND LEAVE POWER IN HANDS OF FRANJIYA, INSTEAD OF SARKIS.

B. SINAI II. FAHMY RIDICULED STATEMENT IN "JOINT COMMUNIQUE" THAT SINAI II RESPONSIBLE FOR LEBANESE EVENTS AND CLAIMED IT FURTHER EVIDENCE OF ABSENCE OF SYRIAN SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY. FAR FROM BEING CAUSE OF KILLING PALESTINIANS, ONLY BENEFICIARIES OF SYRIAN POLICY ARE ISRAEL AND SYRIAN-JORDANIAN AXIS. FACT THAT COMMUNIQUE "TOTALLY DISOWNED" BY ARAFAT, AFFIRMS EGYPT'S CONVICTION ABOUT NEFARIOUS SYRIAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OBJECTIVES. (AHAM CARRIES UPI REPORT THAT ARAFT MAY POSTPONE TRIP TO DAMASCUS JULY 31 AND COME TO CAIRO FIRST.)

C. SOVIET ROLE. SYRIAN CLAIM THAT IT BEING PRESSURED BY SOVIETS RIDICULED AS FAHMY CHARGED SOVIET SHIPS ARE ARRIVING EVERY DAY AT LATAKIA TO UNLOAD HUGE QUANTITIES OF ARMS AND AMMUNITION TO BE USED AGAINST PALESTINIANS.

3. EDITORIAL WRITERS JULY 31 JOINED IN DENUNCIATION OF SYRIA. AHRAM SAID SYRIA MISTAKEN IF IT THINKS BLOOD OF PALESTINIANS AND LEBANESE CAN BE WASHED OFF HANDS OF SYRIAN BA'ATH BY RENEWED ATTACKS ON SINAI II. GUMHURRIYA TOOK HIGH ROAD BY LIMITING ITSELF TO PRAISE FOR EGYPT'S MAJOR ROLE IN SUPPORT OF PALESTINIANS AND PLO RECOGNITION OF THIS FACT AS ILLUSTRATED BY ARAFAT MESSAGE TO SADAT DISASSOCIATING HIMSELF FROM "JOINT COMMUNIQUE." AHRAM CHIEF EDITOR ALI HAMDI AL-GAMAL IS CONVINCED SYRIAN BA'ATH NOT SERIOUS ABOUT ACCORD BUT ONLY PLAYING FOR TIME. HE CITES AS EVIDENCE: (A) ATTACK ON SINAI II TO SOW DISSENSION BETWEEN EGYPT AND PLO; (B) FAILURE TO MENTION WITHDRAWAL OF SYRIAN FORCES WHICH PROVES SYRIA STILL DETERMINED TO ESTABLISH TUTELAGE OVER LEBANON AND PLO; (C) SYRIAN COLLUSION WITH CHAMOUN, GEMAYEL AND FRANJIYA; (D) ISRAELI INACTION AND SILENCE; AND (E) FAILURE OF ACCORD TO DEAL WITH ISRAELI ARMS PIPELINE TO CHAMOUN.

4. COMMENT: GOE HAS WATCHED SYRIAN-PLO TALKS WITH MISGIVINGS. HAVING ONLY RECENTLY SUCCEEDED IN WEANING PLO AWAY FROM SYRIANS, AND HAVING WON SOME CREDIBILITY AS PLO CHAMPION, GOE IS CLEARLY NOT ANXIOUS TO SEE A PLO-SYRIAN RECONCILIATION EXCEPT ON TERMS CALLING FOR SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL AND MAINTENANCE OF PLO INDEPENDENCE. EGYPTIANS WANT TO AVOID SYRIAN DOMINATION OF PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT. IN THIS CONTEXT, FAILURE OF ACCORD TO STIPULATE WITHDRAWAL OF SYRIAN TROOPS AND OTHER ELEMENTS, WHICH IN AGGREGATE GOE SEES AS COMPLETE PLO SUBMISSION TO SYRIANS, WOULD HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENT CAUSE FOR NEGATIVE EGYPTIAN REACTION. HOWEVER, HAD AGREEMENT/COMMUNIQUE BEEN LIMITED TO THIS, WE DOUBT THAT EGYPTIAN REACTION WOULD HAVE BEEN AS BITTER. GRATUITOUS SYRIAN INSERTION OF CHARGE IN COMMUNIQUE THAT LEBANESE DEBACLE RESULTED FROM SINAI II WAVED SPECIAL RED FLAG IN FROM OF GOE BULL WITH PREDICTABLY VIRULENT GOE REACTION.

5. AS WE READ EGYPTIAN STATEMENT, IT IS CAST WITH AN EYE TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PERSUADING SAUDIS (AND OTHER WEALTHY ARAB STATES) THAT EGYPTIAN REACTION IS JUSTIFIED. GOE WILL DOUBTLESS USE THE TWO ELEMENTS CITED ABOVE FOR THIS PURPOSE AND ALSO ITS EXPOSURE OF "DIRECT" SYRIAN-ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE CONTACTS ON LEBANON. FAHMY, AT LAST ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL SESSION, INSISTED THAT PLO-SYRIAN RECONCILIATION WOULD SOLVE "75 PERCENT" OF LEBANESE PROBLEM. SAUDIS AND KUWAITIS HAVE SHARED THIS ASSESSMENT, AS EVIDENCED MOST RECENTLY AFTER KUWAITI FONMIN'S LAST VISIT TO JIDDA. EGYPTIANS WILL ARGUE SYRIANS HAVE NOT SOUGHT GENUINE RECONCILIATION, BUT HAVE INSISTED UPON CAPITULATION. EILTS

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